

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USNATO 12911 211323Z
ACTION EUR-12

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SECDEF WASHDC
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS
DA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
ABERDEEN PROVING GRND MD
CDRDARCOM ALEXANDRIA VA
PICATINNYARS DOVER NJ
USNMR SHAPE BE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
CDR TARADCOM WARREN MI

S E C R E T USNATO 12911

APG PLEASE PASS TO CDR USATECOM. DARCOM FOR DRCIRD.
PICATINNY ARS FOR APM TMAD XM1 (DRCPM-GCM-M).
TARADCOM FOR PM XM1 TKSYS.

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: OCON, NATO, MILI
SUBJECT: TANK MAIN ARMAMENT EVALUATION

REF: (A) DIA 6962 DTG 241726ZNOV77, (B) USCINCEUR 9254
DTG 141521ZDEC77.

1. WE ARE FOLLOWING THE TANK MAIN ARMAMENT EVALUATION WITH
KEEN INTEREST. ALL REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE TESTS ARE PRO-
CEEDING, AND ARE BEING SEEN AS PROCEEDING, IN A FAIR AND
IMPARTIAL MANNER. THIS IS CERTAINLY OF THE UTMOST IMPOR-
TANCE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 USNATO 12911 211323Z

2. IN NOVEMBER 1977, DR. TRAINOR, ACTING AS A MEMBER OF
THE ARMY'S TANK MAIN ARMAMENTS INDEPENDENT EVALUATION TEAM
WHICH VISITED SELECTED NATO ALLIES, DISCUSSED THE TANK GUN
TESTS, THE TEAM'S ROLE AND OBTAINED OUR INFORMAL VIEWS.
THE US ARMY'S EFFORT TO INFORM AND SOLICIT VIEWS OF SELECTED
ALLIES IS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY AND, WE BELIEVE, CONTRI-

BUTED TO THE CALM WATERS OF THE PAST FEW MONTHS.

3. NEVERTHELESS, THE ISSUE IS POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE, PARTICULARLY SINCE TWO OUT OF THE THREE CANDIDATES WILL NOT BE SELECTED. THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE THERE ARE SEVERAL ISSUES BESIDES COMPARATIVE TECHNOLOGICAL ONES WHICH THE US SHOULD NOT FORGET IN CONNECTION WITH THE TANK GUN DECISION.

- A. IF WE DECIDE TO RETAIN THE 105MM, ALLIES WILL EXPECT US TO EXPLAIN THE DECISION IN LIGHT OF RECENT INTELLIGENCE INDICATIONS THAT THE WARSAW PACT WILL OUTGUN US. THESE REPORTS INCLUDE:

- THE RECENT FRENCH (GEN. CAUCHIE) REPORT THAT THE T72 TANK IS EQUIPPED WITH A 125MM GUN.

- THE ASSESSMENTS THAT THE DEVELOPMENTAL SOVIET T80 TANK COULD ENTER LIMITED PRODUCTION IN THE EARLY 1980'S. (REFS A AND B).

- B. REGARDLESS OF THE GUN SELECTED, THE US MUST FULLY ADDRESS THE IMPACT ON INTEROPERABILITY WITH PRINCIPAL NATO ALLIES. INDEED, GIVEN THE HIGH LEVEL PUBLIC US EMPHASIS ON INTEROPERABILITY AND STANDARDIZATION, THE ALLIES WILL EXPECT A CLEAR SIGN THAT THE POSITIVE IMPACT ON STANDARDIZATION/ INTEROPERABILITY WITH PRINCIPAL ALLIES WAS GIVEN FULL WEIGHT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 USNATO 12911 211323Z

IN EVALUATING THE DIFFERENT GUNS. INTEROPERABILITY COULD PROVE SIGNIFICANT IN ANY DECISION BETWEEN THE UK AND FRG 120MM GUNS GIVEN THE FACT THAT FRG WILL FIELD FAR LARGER NUMBER OF TANKS IN NATO AREAS WHERE US FORCES WILL OPERATE. MOREOVER, WE EXPECT THE ALLIES AND PARTICULARLY THE FRG WILL NOT ACCEPT THE ARGUMENT THAT WE SHOULD STAY WITH THE 105 MM SOLELY BECAUSE OF THE PREDOMINANT NUMBER OF 105 MM GUNS CURRENTLY USED BY NATO. THEY WILL ARGUE THAT IF WE ALWAYS OPERATED ON SUCH A BASIS, WE WOULD SEVERELY LIMIT ADOPTION OF NEW SYSTEMS.

4. FINALLY, WE BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO INFORM OUR NATO ALLIES, ESPECIALLY THE UK AND FRG, OF OUR DECISION BEFORE A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE. THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD INCLUDE A THOROUGH EXPLANATION AND FOLLOW CLOSELY OUR EXPLANATION TO ALLIES SO AS TO GUARD AGAINST DISTORTED LEAKS. BENNETT

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